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COMMITTEE ON THE ELIMINATION OF
DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

CONSIDERATION OF REPORTS SUBMITTED BY STATES PARTIES UNDER ARTICLE 18 OF THE CONVENTION ON THE ELIMINATION OF ALL FORMS OF DISCRIMINATION AGAINST WOMEN

Third periodic reports of States parties

ARGENTINA*

* For the initial report submitted by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/5/Add.39 and Amend.1; for its consideration by the Committee, see CEDAW/C/SR.112 and 118 and Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-third Session, Supplement No. 38, paras. 341-396. For the second periodic report by the Government of Argentina, see CEDAW/C/ARG/2, CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.1 and CEDAW/C/ARG/2/Add.2.

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# 1. GENERAL

## The Argentine Republic: land and people

The Argentine Republic, which is in southern South America, is very long from north to south and asymmetrical, with a wide range of ecosystems, climates and relief. On the mainland, it covers 2,780,400 square kilometres. The 1991 National Census showed that it had a population of 32,615,528, 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female, spread very unevenly. The population estimates and projections for the period 1950-2050 made by the National Institute for Statistics and Censuses (INDEC) show that in 1995 the population was around 34,768,456, with women representing 50.94 per cent of the total.

A population of this size produces a density of 12 persons per square kilometre, which means that in South American terms Argentina has a low population density. In 1991 the most densely populated area was the Federal Capital, which had almost 15,000 inhabitants per square kilometre; Santa Cruz Province had only 0.7 inhabitants per square kilometre, and the entire Patagonian region did not exceed 3 inhabitants per square kilometre. Seventy per cent of the total population is concentrated in somewhat less than one third of the country, corresponding to the provinces of Buenos Aires, Córdoba, Santa Fe and Mendoza.

Data from the 1991 census showed that in the population group aged 0-4 years there were 42,000 more males than females, while already in the 15-19 age group there were close to 15,000 more females than males. These trends become increasingly pronounced in the higher age groups, with women representing 58 per cent of the population over 65 years of age (and 62 per cent of the group over 75).

## Fertility

When the decline in population growth is examined by age group, it can be seen that there has been a drop in the group under five years of age, which after an increase in the 1970s displayed negative figures in the 1980s. This indicates a drop in fertility. Both the birth rate and the fertility rate have dropped in Argentina over the past decade, resulting in the lower population growth of the 1980s. The general fertility rate dropped throughout the 1980s, from 95 per thousand in 1980 to 85 per thousand in 1991.[1] If this indicator is analysed by age group, it can be seen that there has been a marked drop in fertility in the younger age groups and a growing trend in that same direction in the group over age 30. This drop in fertility has affected all age groups and is widespread, which indicates that there will be a greater drop in the population growth rate at the close of this century.

The total fertility rate (in terms of the number of children a woman has had by the end of her childbearing years) for the period 1990-1995 is 2.77 per cent for the whole country. This indicates a clear drop in comparison

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[1] National Population and Housing Census, 1991, final results concerning general characteristics, national total. INDEC, December 1994.

with the period 1980-1985, in which the rate was 3.15 per cent. Total fertility rates reflect the national mean; when these rates are broken down, it can be seen that in general rural women have more children than urban women, and a higher fertility rate is found among women with lower educational levels and at lower socio-economic levels. There are also regional discrepancies. The highest fertility rates are found in the north-eastern and north-western provinces and in the Patagonian provinces. An intermediate situation, close to the national mean, applies in the provinces of the Cuyo; the lowest fertility levels are found in the Pampean provinces. In the Metropolitan Region, Buenos Aires has the lowest rate in the entire country, in contrast to the rate for the districts of Greater Buenos Aires.[2]

When fertility levels are considered in the context of the marital status of women of childbearing age it can be seen that in the two major groups - married women and women living in de facto unions - fertility levels have dropped, particularly among married women, while women living in de facto unions continue to be the most prolific, although their fertility levels are also falling.

Geographical distribution

When rural-urban movements are examined, it can be seen that Argentina's urban growth has been greater than its overall growth. In 1991, 88.4 per cent of the population lived in urban areas, while in 1970 the figure was 79 per cent and in 1914 only 52.7 per cent.

Population by age group

These population changes also resulted in an early shift in the age structure of the population. Around 1950 only 30 per cent of Argentines were under 15 years of age, whereas the corresponding figure was around 50 per cent in almost all other countries in the region. In the meantime a more pronounced aging process has been taking place, resulting in an appreciable increase in the number of people over 60 years of age, who represented 7 per cent of the population in 1950 and approximately 14 per cent in 1994. The ageing of the overall population is basically due to a major drop in fertility (except in the 1970s, when there was an increase in the most densely populated urban centres of the country), and to the decline in mortality that has occurred in recent years. However, the differences in the numbers of males and females can be attributed to excess male mortality, which results in a considerable difference in life expectancy in the two groups.

Families and heads of household

The Argentine population lives in a total of 8,927,525 households, 22.22 per cent of which are headed by women.[3] However, it can be assumed that this information is not completely accurate: statements concerning the head of

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[2] Ibid.

[3] Ibid.

household are subject to cultural bias, since the concept of head of household has traditionally been associated with men. As a result, the number of households headed by women increased enormously in the periods 1960-1980 and 1980-1991, which suggests that this was not a real increase but the result of a cultural change which gave rise to statements more in keeping with the actual situations in households.

Conclusions

All the factors described above demonstrate that Argentina belongs to the group of countries (together with Uruguay and Cuba) whose populations have reached a very advanced transitional stage. It is no longer a country with a rapidly growing young population, but has instead become a country with slow population growth and a relatively old population. That is to say, Argentina has a population with a low birth rate and moderate mortality (its mortality rate is no longer low, because of the appreciable increase in the number of old people).

In Argentina, females exhibit a number of demographic characteristics that differ from those of males. With regard to basic population factors, a lower number of females continues to be born but female longevity is greater than that of males, which gives rise to slight but appreciable differences in their age structure: in the female population there is a slightly lower proportion of young people and a slightly higher proportion of old people.

Moreover, in regional terms, women tend to be more urban than men: in 1990, 87.4 per cent of females lived in cities, while 84.4 per cent of males did.

## SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC SITUATION

In 1989 the Argentine Government embarked on bringing about a profound transformation in Argentina. The main policies implemented eliminated inflation, transformed the State structurally and promoted the process of integrating Argentina at the international level. In a democratic framework, a process of profound economic change was begun, in order to achieve the necessary efficiency and competitiveness to integrate the country into world markets.

Having reached a world record in terms of inflation between 1975 and 1989, Argentina undertook the implementation of a Convertibility Plan, adopted by an Act of Congress, which in just a few years brought inflation down to almost zero. The reform of the State was begun and most nationalized companies were privatized. In the period 1989-1994 the number of State employees was reduced by over 680,000 and subsidies concealed by promotion systems disappeared. Health and education services and social welfare programmes were transferred to the provinces, and the tax system was reorganized. Gross domestic product (GDP) rose in 1990 for the fifth consecutive year, which had not happened since the 1970s (between 1989 and 1994 GDP rose by 34.5 per cent, according to data provided by the Ministry of Economy Affairs and Public Works and Services).

The changes in the institutional framework of the economy that Argentina has been making since 1989 have emphasized the State's role in safeguarding and making provision for fundamental benefits to society (such as security, justice, stability and equal opportunity) and basic norms, rather than direct State involvement in the production of goods and excessive intervention in markets. State reform, tax reform, deregulation, opening up trade to the exterior, reducing inflation and uncertainty, together with a reduction in capital, are all designed to enable the private sector to achieve sustainable economic growth, making possible considerable productivity gains through the introduction of technology and the modernization of the economic structure.

After years of growing isolation from progress in the rest of the world, in 1990 the Argentine economy began a process of accelerated integration into the world economy. As a result, there has been a notable increase in the introduction of machinery, capital and technology, as well as a greater volume of higher quality products, improved standards of living, and higher expectations among the population. This increasing linkage of Argentina to the rest of the world allows the country to benefit from economic globalization. The changes made have yielded rapid results, but it will be some time before the full benefits can be reaped.

In the context of the economic growth described above, priority is being given to the implementation of policies to improve employment levels.

A labour reform is accordingly being implemented, which is chiefly designed to:

- Reduce social taxes: from 1996 the employer's contribution was reduced, with the result that it dropped from an average of 33 per cent to an average of 21.3 per cent of payroll;

- Make employment contracts more flexible, facilitating fixed-term and part-time hiring;

- Modernize collective bargaining, by promoting decentralization and encouraging the conclusion of agreements at the company level;

- Achieve improvements in job creation by further developing the Employment and Training Programmes, as well as in assistance to the unemployed. The monthly number of recipients under this programme rose from only 50,000 in 1993 to 380,000 in 1996. The total funds set aside for promoting employment and job training rose from 0.01 per cent of GDP in 1992 to 1.41 per cent in 1996.

In the area of social security, the Government has begun a modernization process ranging from the establishment of an Integrated Retirement and Pensions System - compromising both a State or contributory scheme and an individually funded scheme - to a proposal for the reform of the relevant administrative organ (ANSES) modifying the legal framework for the social insurance scheme and for family allowances and health insurance.

In 1996 a second State reform was undertaken to consolidate the process begun in 1989 and make the State more responsive and efficient, by simplifying organizational structures, restructuring all areas of government and continuing decentralization measures and the reduction of bureaucracy.

Management by objectives, focusing on citizens, structuring human resources, and establishing a complementary relationship between the public and private sectors are the principles guiding this process of State modernization. Furthermore, a Job Retraining Fund has been set up within the purview of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, to train public-sector workers for re-entry into the labour market.

The activities of the National Women's Council and the specific information on women provided in this report must be seen in the context of this general framework of change and overall transformation of the Argentine Republic.

Argentine women have participated in their country's development in various ways, the two principal ways being through domestic work and through activities directly linked to the economy. As in other countries in the region, the contribution made by Argentine women is only partly visible.

Attempts to measure women's contribution to the Argentine economy through domestic work have not changed conventional attitudes in that connection. Women's work is thus only perceived when it can be measured as an economic activity. The proportion of women in the economically active population must therefore be calculated on an approximate basis. Argentina has an economically active population of 13,202,200, representing 40.47 per cent of the total population;[4] women represent 36.19 per cent and men 63.80 per cent of the economically active population.

In the 1991 census, improved methods of measurement facilitated the collection of more precise employment data, and thus made it possible to demonstrate the higher level of women's participation. This higher participation was a result of the combined influence of better data collection and women's actual entry into the labour market, which has produced what can be regarded as a trend towards the feminization of the workforce.[5]

The 1991 census also examined trends in the country's employment structure in the intercensal period, revealing significant changes in the occupational categories in which the economically active population is employed. For a total of 4,392,429 employed women, the breakdown by occupational category is as follows:

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[4] INDEC, National Population and Housing Census, 1991.

[5] Ibid. Partial data from the 1994 Permanent Household Survey show that this trend is continuing.

- Manual and non-manual workers:

| | |
|---|---|
| Public sector | 941 140 |
| Private sector | 1 314 508 |
| Domestic service | 865 258 |

- Workers on own account 715 086
- Employers 178 948
- Family workers without fixed pay 366 034
- Unknown 11 455

The executive branch has undertaken an initiative to make domestic work by women more visible. This initiative takes the form of the Homemakers' Retirement Benefits Bill, from which over 1 million women will benefit. The scheme will be optional, and recipients will be entitled to standard retirement, invalidity and death benefits. In setting up this special scheme, the State would be enabling housewives to qualify for social security coverage on the basis of lower contributions, in keeping with their ability to pay, which is lower than that of independent female workers.

Most women work in services, chiefly as office workers, employees in commerce and in domestic service, while men are more evenly distributed among the various economic sectors. Female domestic workers represent from 20 to 22 per cent of the female economically active population and need special policies to upgrade their employment conditions; action has therefore been taken to improve their situation by means of compulsory contributions towards retirement benefits.

When labour-market participation is considered in terms of age, male-female differences become apparent. Female participation peaks in the age group 20-25 years, and gradually declines until the age of 50 (dropping sharply thereafter); male participation rates are higher at lower ages, but continue to rise for a longer period, peaking in the age group 35-40. The drop in female participation from the age of 25 onwards is attributable to the high number of women engaged in household tasks, reproduction and care of family members from that age onwards. In the 1980s there was a lower rate of decline in female participation and even a certain amount of re-entry into the labour market from the age of 35 onwards.[6]

There are training programmes for women such as the Women and Vocational Training Subprogramme, and programmes that set quotas for participation by women, such as the Restructuring Programme, whose strategic goal is

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[6] Mujeres Latinoamericanas en Cifras, Argentina, Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO), 1994.

participation by women particularly in more productive activities that generate a higher income, which promotes women's involvement in non-traditional activities through the Young People's Project, the Image Project and the Micro-Enterprises Project. A Community Services Programme is being implemented, which offers temporary employment for unemployed male and female workers who provide social services to the community. At least 80 per cent of those enrolled in these projects must be women, preferably heads of household, total enrolment being 10,420.

There is every indication that the problems faced by women in the job market are less and less attributable to their level of formal education and more to the segregation of the labour market by sex, to lack of specific vocational training and to the persistence of cultural patterns that perpetrate the assumption that women's work complements that of men.[1]

## POLITICAL, LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE SYSTEM

The 1994 revision of the Constitution did not change the country's form of government, since Argentina remains a federal republic, or its system of representation; but more organs of institutional importance were established. In the executive branch, provision was made for a Chef de Cabinet, who reports to the President and is responsible for the general administration of the country.

To provide greater stability, structure, and legal and institutional support, in the legislative branch, provision was made in the Constitution for a Parliamentary High Commissioner, who has full operational autonomy, is appointed by Congress for a five-year term (renewable only once), and enjoys the same immunities and privileges as legislators so as to ensure that he or she can achieve his or her goals.

The High Commissioner's role is to defend and safeguard human rights and other rights, guarantees and interests protected by the Constitution and Argentine laws against acts or omissions on the part of the Administration and to oversee public administration.

The way in which the Office of the Parliamentary High Commissioner is set up and operates is governed by special legislation (Acts Nos. 24,284 and 24,379).

The new Constitution recognizes the institutional autonomy of the City of Buenos Aires, which continues to be the capital of the Republic. The city's new status enables it to elect its own head of government and its own legislature. Currently, the Constituent's Convention is meeting with a view to drafting the city's Statute.

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[1] Ibid.

## 2. LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES TO IMPLEMENT THE CONVENTION IN ARGENTINA

The 1994 constitutional reform represented major qualitative progress in terms of recognition of women's rights, since it gave the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women the highest possible legal status.

Article 75, paragraph 22, of the Constitution indicates that the human rights agreements listed there are on a par with the Constitution and are to be regarded as complementing the rights and safeguards laid down in the Constitution.

The listing of international human rights agreements includes:

- The American Declaration on the Rights and Duties of Man;
- The Universal Declaration of Human Rights;
- The International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights;
- The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and the Optional Protocol thereto;
- The Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide;
- The International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination;
- The Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women;
- The Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;
- The Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Furthermore, the relevant provision of the Constitution is formulated in such a way as to leave open the possibility of including other human rights instruments through their adoption by special majorities in Congress.

By Act No. 24,632 (Official Gazette of 9 April 1996) the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women was adopted (Belem do Pará Convention).

By Act No. 24,658 (Official Gazette of 17 July 1996), the Protocol Additional to the American Convention on Human Rights in the Area of Economic, Social and Cultural Rights was adopted (San Salvador Protocol).

Other advances are reflected in the 1994 constitutional reform.

Article 37 of the Constitution guarantees the full exercise of political rights, in accordance with the principle of the sovereignty of the people. Moreover, with respect to access for women to political roles, the Constitution specifies that genuine equality of opportunity for men and women with respect to access to elective office and to positions in political parties shall be guaranteed by means of affirmative action regulating political parties and the electoral system.

The Constituent Assembly thus reflected in the Constitution women's experience with the development and implementation of the Quotas Act (Act No. 24,012), which stipulates that at least 30 per cent of candidates for elective office shall be women, and that the women candidates in question must be permitted to stand for election to positions to which they can expect to be elected. It was established that the quotas set in connection with this affirmative action should not be lower than those set when the Constitution was adopted.

One of the powers of Congress is to adopt and promote affirmative action measures guaranteeing genuine equality of opportunity and treatment, and the full enjoyment and exercise of the rights laid down in the Constitution and in existing international human rights treaties, particularly the rights of children, women, the elderly and disabled persons (art. 75, para. 23).

In particular, the Constitution calls for the establishment of a comprehensive special social security scheme for women during pregnancy and lactation and for neglected children until completion of elementary education.

In another Order, adopted in December 1995, the Chamber of Deputies decided to set up a permanent Bicameral Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, to be made up of six deputies and six senators (either men or women, in each case) committed to eliminating discrimination and particularly concerned to seek out and identify instances of inequality of men and women and to promote action to ensure equity.

The Bicameral Commission's mandate is to:

(a) Assess the extent of quantitative and qualitative change that has taken place since the adoption of Act No. 23,179 regarding:

a.1. Inequality with respect to women's participation in determining economic structures and policy and in influencing the production process;

a.2. Inequality with respect to education, health, employment and other areas in which women's awareness of their rights and utilization of their abilities can be promoted to the fullest extent;

a.3. Poverty;

a.4. Violence against women;

a.5. Lack of sensitivity and commitment to women's rights;

a.6. Inequality with respect to the distribution of decision-making and other powers at all levels;

a.7. Inadequate machinery at all levels for the advancement of women;

(b) Review existing legislation with a view to proposing amendments to, or the elimination of, provisions that are degrading to women because they contain gender stereotypes incompatible with recognition of the right to self-determination of the individual, families and a diverse citizenry;

(c) Promote innovative projects or experiments for the advancement of women;

(d) Propose new strategies and affirmative action that will help to overcome the chief obstacles identified, and make provision for the necessary institutional machinery and resources;

(e) Draw up a bill on a plan for equality for women, for consideration at a bicameral session.

## A. NATIONAL MECHANISMS

It is particularly noteworthy that the National Women's Council has become a permanent feature of the structure of the Government. Ever since the Council was originally set up in 1992 it has had its own budget and established technical staff, and thus has been able to benefit from accumulated experience and work performed to date.

Under Decree No. 291/95, which amended Decree No. 1426/92 to some extent, in recognition of the need for both federal and provincial agencies to participate in the development and formulation of public policies to advance the status of women, the Cabinet of Women Advisers to the President was abolished, and two constitutive bodies were established under the National Women's Council.

One of these bodies is the Directorate, which is made up of representatives from the most senior levels of the various ministries and other federal government agencies. Its function is to ensure more effective and efficient interdepartmental cooperation with a view to integrating gender-related issues into the Government's overall planning and action.

The other body is the Federal Women's Council, comprising the members of the Directorate and also representatives of the provincial governments. Its function is to ensure that the social situations of women in the provinces have an impact on and are taken into consideration in connection with the national agenda. At the same time, the Council is designed to facilitate the emergence of more flexible forms of interaction leading to the joint implementation of programmes and projects within a mutual strengthening and enrichment process in the area of policy development and formulation.

In the framework of the second State reform, which reorganized the federal civil service with a view to optimizing its operation, the National Women's

Council has retained its high-level position and been more effectively integrated into the institutional structure of the Government, while its Chairperson has ministerial rank and plays a key role in government policy-making, reporting directly to the President.

In connection with the regional integration process that the continent is currently undergoing, the National Women's Council has stated that it considers the inclusion of gender issues important in the context of MERCOSUR (Common Market of the Southern Cone).

Accordingly, in October 1995 the Council, acting on its own initiative, organized a symposium entitled "Towards equal opportunity for women in work and production in the context of MERCOSUR, Chile and Bolivia", which was held under the auspices of, and funded by, the European Union.

The countries of the region sent representatives from their respective government offices with responsibility for women's issues, and the symposium was also attended by representatives of business, labour and academic non-governmental organizations specializing in the field under consideration, and of the European Union.

At the symposium, the representatives of government offices with responsibility for women's issues agreed to submit to their respective Governments the Buenos Aires Declaration, which calls for the establishment, at the regional level, of a body to coordinate and develop proposals for the promotion of equal opportunity for women in the regional integration process, including participation in all levels of the institutional structure of MERCOSUR and the management of funding for regional projects provided by international organizations.

## B. PROVINCIAL MECHANISMS

There are a total of 13 agencies (known variously as Councils, Secretariats, Directorates, Departments, etc.) for women's issues under provincial jurisdiction. The diversity of institutional forms is due to the fact that women's agencies are affected by frequent changes within provincial government structures, and consequently are exceptionally vulnerable from an institutional standpoint.

The National Women's Council would like to see the establishment and strengthening of women's agencies at the provincial and municipal levels; having the Federal Council operate with all the provinces participating will imply a greater degree of commitment on the part of the provincial governments and afford a means of monitoring the implementation of policies relating to the status of women.

The Programme for the Institutional Consolidation of Women's Issues in Provincial Areas described in the last periodic report gave material form to the results of experimental pilot technical assistance and training projects, including the development, implementation and evaluation of inter-institutional projects for each of the provinces involved.

These experimental projects included the development of visual materials for sensitivity training relating to gender discrimination, promotion of networking, action relating to the issue of teenage mothers, and the dissemination of information about women's rights.

## SPECIFIC MEASURES: IMPLEMENTATION OF THE CONVENTION

### (Articles 1 to 3)

[Advancement of women]

### Article 1

For the purposes of the present Convention, the term "discrimination against women" shall mean any distinction, exclusion or restriction made on the basis of sex which has the effect or purpose of impairing or nullifying the recognition, enjoyment or exercise by women, irrespective of their marital status, on a basis of equality of men and women, of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the political, economic, social, cultural, civil or any other field.

### Article 2

States Parties condemn discrimination against women in all its forms, agree to pursue by all appropriate means and without delay a policy of eliminating discrimination against women and, to this end, undertake:

(a) To embody the principle of the equality of men and women in their national constitutions or other appropriate legislation if not yet incorporated therein and to ensure, through law and other appropriate means, the practical realization of this principle;

(b) To adopt appropriate legislative and other measures, including sanctions where appropriate, prohibiting all discrimination against women;

(c) To establish legal protection of the rights of women on an equal basis with men and to ensure through competent national tribunals and other public institutions the effective protection of women against any act of discrimination;

(d) To refrain from engaging in any act or practice of discrimination against women and to ensure that public authorities and institutions shall act in conformity with this obligation;

(e) To take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women by any person, organization or enterprise;

(f) To take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to modify or abolish existing laws, regulations, customs and practices which constitute discrimination against women;

(g) To repeal all national penal provisions which constitute discrimination against women.

Article 3

States Parties shall take in all fields, in particular in the political, social, economic and cultural fields, all appropriate measures, including legislation, to ensure the full development and advancement of women, for the purpose of guaranteeing them the exercise and enjoyment of human rights and fundamental freedoms on a basis of equality with men.

As noted in the previous periodic report, the Constituent Assembly entrusted with responsibility for reforming the Constitution (1994) took a favourable view of the proposed recognition of women's rights, giving the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women the highest legal status and including in the Constitution other provisions aimed at ensuring equality of opportunity and treatment for men and women.

In view of the Convention's new status, Argentina finds itself confronted with the task of revising its legislation to eliminate discriminatory provisions and give effect to the rights set forth in the Convention.

In the area of family law, article 1276 of the Civil Code, which entrusts the administration of assets of uncertain origin to the husband, will have to be amended.

As regards criminal law, Act No. 24,453 of March 1995 has eliminated the offence of adultery, which was characterized in accordance with different standards, depending on whether the reference was to a man or to a woman. However, the Penal Code still requires a comprehensive review to bring its provisions into line with those of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and eliminate all discriminatory measures (e.g. the penalties constituting the section on "Offences against Decency").

Another noteworthy accomplishment is the participation of women in military life. In 1982, with the establishment of the School for the Professional Women's Corps, women became an integral part of the army, and the first classes of women officers and non-commissioned officers specializing in the fields of health care and computer science graduated in due course.

At present, out of a total of 48,175 officers, non-commissioned officers, cadets and other ranks, 6 per cent are women. This is a significant figure in view of the short period of time that has elapsed since the definitive acceptance of women as officers and soldiers in the army.

At the National Military College, young women who have completed their secondary education take three years of training, in the same academic setting as the other students, and then graduate as Professional Nursing Officers. At the Sergeant Cabral School for Non-Commissioned Officers, women have been accepted as non-commissioned officer trainees in the armed forces since 1996, while the Military School for Combat Support Service Officers now takes women

officer trainees for the health care, justice, computer and pilot-technician services.

Since 1995, the military academies located in Buenos Aires, Mendoza, Córdoba, Santa Fé, Tucumán and Comodoro Rivadavia have been accepting women, who have graduated on an equal footing with men with the rank of reserve sub-lieutenant in each branch of the armed forces. The prospective assignment of women reserve sub-lieutenants to the various units, in which they could rise to the rank of first lieutenant in the various branches of the armed forces, is currently under consideration.

This year the army has 1,800 women volunteers, representing 12.5 per cent of all soldiers enrolled.

Also this year, the army made military officers' careers fully accessible to women, who are thus free to rise even to the rank of general if they have the necessary ability.

It is thus clear that there is no discrimination on the basis of sex as regards the assignment of functions and appointments. Since this is a recent development, however, there are as yet no women of senior rank.

In the framework of an agreement with the Ombudsman for Prisons, the National Women's Council has initiated action aimed at women serving prison sentences.

A survey of women in prison is currently being conducted with a view to determining their socio-economic profile and treatment within the prison system. This is the first part of an investigative research project consisting of two stages, the first of which deals with women who have been convicted, while the second will be concerned with women awaiting trial.

Analysis of information available to date (the processing of the data is still incomplete) indicates that not only has the number of women being held in prison risen over the past decade, but so has the proportion that women represent of the total prison population. In 1984, women accounted for 4.2 per cent of the total prison population (i.e. persons being held in federal prisons), the corresponding figure for 1993 was 6.2 per cent, and by 1995 it had risen to 10.7 per cent.

A pilot programme of training courses is to be organized at Ezeiza Prison on an experimental basis.

## Article 4

[Temporary measures to accelerate the achievement of equality of men and women]

1. Adoption by States Parties of temporary special measures aimed at accelerating de facto equality between men and women shall not be considered discrimination as defined in the present Convention, but shall in no way entail

as a consequence the maintenance of unequal or separate standards; these measures shall be discontinued when the objectives of equality of opportunity and treatment have been achieved.

2. Adoption by States Parties of special measures, including those measures contained in the present Convention, aimed at protecting maternity shall not be considered discriminatory.

The experiment initiated in Argentina by the implementation of Act No. 24,012, which was promulgated in 1991, has yielded notably fruitful results. Thanks to the Act, women members of the Chamber of Deputies, who accounted for 5.8 per cent of the total membership in 1991, account for 24.5 per cent of it as at the date of this report.

The National Women's Council adopted a policy of monitoring the implementation of the Quotas Act very closely. The Council even went to court seeking to have party lists which did not conform to the requirements of the Act disqualified.

It also worked to have similar legislation passed in the provinces, organizing awareness campaigns and providing advice and technical assistance at the drafting stage. As a result of this policy, 18 of Argentina's provinces[*] now have quota laws that apply within their jurisdictions.

At the time of the 1994 constitutional reform, the constitutionality of the affirmative action provided for by Act No. 24,012 was challenged in the courts.

The courts ruled that the Act was constitutional, on the grounds that "... neither in the letter nor in the spirit of Act No. 24,012 is there any intent to persecute anyone, nor any of hostile intent. Nor is there any undue privilege or arbitrary discrimination in favour of women. As the debate that took place in Parliament clearly shows, the motives that prompted the introduction of the Act and the method of positive discrimination that it establishes may be regarded as questionable, but they cannot fairly be termed arbitrary or unreasonable. Furthermore, in view of the Supreme Court precedents cited, they are also not incompatible with the guarantee of equality before the law established by article 16 of the Constitution" (BJLP, with regard to the constitutionality of Act No. 24,012 and the corresponding regulatory decree, ref. 404,135, 1993).

In connection with the election of the members of the Convention whose task was to revise the Constitution, in the light of the experience acquired during the 1993 elections, the Ministry of Justice adopted resolution No. 168/94, instructing the representatives of the Government Procurator's Office to take the necessary action to enforce Act No. 24,012 and its Regulatory Decree in registering party lists.

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[*] Buenos Aires, Chaco, Córdoba, Corrientes, Formosa, La Pampa, La Rioja, Mendoza, Misiones, Neuquén, Río Negro, Salta, San Juan, Santa Cruz, Santa Fé, Tucumán, Chubut and Tierra del Fuego.

The Constituent Assembly acknowledged the validity of measures of this kind by giving Congress authority to "legislate for and promote affirmative action measures guaranteeing genuine equality of opportunity and treatment, and the full enjoyment of the rights laid down in the Constitution and in existing international human rights treaties, particularly the rights of children, women, the elderly and disabled persons" (art. 75, para. 23). The relevance of such measures to political rights is expressly stated in article 37, which guarantees genuine equality of opportunity between men and women as regards access to elective office and positions in political parties.

In the Constituent Assembly, the selection of whose members was subject to the provisions of the Quotas Act, women held 25.6 per cent of the seats.

When national elections for the Chamber of Deputies were next held, in 1995, observers from the National Women's Council were on hand to make sure that Act No. 24,012 was enforced.

The Council notified the Parliamentary High Commissioner whenever the guidelines set forth in Act No. 24,012 were not being observed, as happened in some provinces, and as a result the High Commissioner, acting within his sphere of responsibility, called on the Federal Electoral Chamber to urge the courts with competence in the matter in the various districts to ensure that party lists included the proportion of women candidates specified in Act No. 24,012 (resolution 157/95).

The new National Constitution incorporates group rights and provides that amparo proceedings for redress for any form of discrimination may be instituted by the person affected, the Parliamentary High Commissioner, or associations organized for the purpose, and has thereby established a new framework for enforcement of appropriate affirmative action.

The National Women's Council instituted amparo proceedings in the courts seeking recognition of its right to demand the enforcement of legal provisions guaranteeing equality of opportunity between men and women, and the right of all citizens to vote for an egalitarian list of candidates.

The Court of Appeal upheld that right, stating that "... since Act No. 24,012 provides that the lists of political parties must include a minimum of 30 per cent women 'with a chance of being elected', on the one hand every political party is under an obligation to prepare its list of candidates in accordance with the Act, with failure to do so entailing non-registration of the list, and on the other hand every citizen who has the right to vote under the Constitution (art. 37 of the Constitution) is given the corresponding right to vote for lists of candidates that include a proportion of women as prescribed by the Act. If a party's list is not in accordance with the Act, not only is the Act itself being contravened, but the voter's right referred to above, which is based on the Act and consequently derived from the Constitution, is being restricted and infringed ... The concrete, substantial prejudice that the voter suffers consists in being deprived of the right to vote for a list of candidates of the party of his or her choice, prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of the law, and in being compelled as a result to vote for a list that does not conform to the law, to vote for another party, or to return a

blank ballot. This is patently incompatible with the above-mentioned article 37, which guarantees 'the full exercise of political rights'". With respect to the standing of the Council, the Court held that since its primary objective was the fulfilment of Argentina's commitment to accede to the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, "... it cannot be denied the right to initiate legal action to attain that objective by seeking, in particular, to ensure that women are included in lists of candidates pursuant to Act No. 24,012, article 37 of the Constitution, and the second transition clause".

## Article 5

[Elimination of stereotypes]

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures:

(a) To modify the social and cultural patterns of conduct of men and women, with a view to achieving the elimination of prejudices and customary and all other practices which are based on the idea of the inferiority or the superiority of either of the sexes or on stereotyped roles for men and women;

(b) To ensure that family education includes a proper understanding of maternity as a social function and the recognition of the common responsibility of men and women in the upbringing and development of their children, it being understood that the interest of the children is the primordial consideration in all cases.

In December 1994 Congress passed Act No. 24,417, on protection against domestic violence.

In 1995, in connection with the passage of the Protection against Domestic Violence Act, the Chamber of Deputies adopted Declaration 5144-D-95, stating that it "... would like to see the Executive undertake, through the appropriate bodies, a national information campaign on the subject of domestic violence".

In March 1996 the Federal Executive adopted Decree No. 235/96, laying down regulations applicable to Act. No. 24,417, the Protection against Domestic Violence Act. While for jurisdictional reasons the Act is as yet applicable only to the City of Buenos Aires, it has brought the subject onto the national agenda.

This legal instrument contains a number of major advances:

- It is expressly stated that the concept of the family group includes family groups originating from de facto unions (art. 1);

- An informal approach is the rule for purposes of substantiating complaints: they may be either in writing or oral, and legal assistance is not required for filing them. Short legal time limits are specified;

- A complaint may be accompanied by a petition for precautionary measures relating to support payments, such as an order requiring the abuser to be removed from the family home or denying him access to the victim's dwelling or place of work;

- Professional workers in the field of health and social and educational assistance services are required to report acts of violence of which they become aware in the course of their work;

- Family courts are given authority to hear complaints, without prejudice to the amendment to the Code of Criminal Procedure allowing a judge, in a case of alleged contravention of the law within a family group living together, to order the removal of the accused person from the family home where the circumstances of the case are such that there is a reasonable presumption of recurrence;

- Provision is made for the establishment of orientation and counselling centres and a specialized interdisciplinary body whose function is to provide courts hearing such cases with technical support;

- A central file of complaints is to be established;

- The work of specialized non-governmental organizations which may bring interdisciplinary teams to bear on the analysis and treatment of domestic violence is recognized.

Against this background, in April 1996 the Ministry of Justice issued its resolution 109, adopting a publicity programme to promote awareness of the content and aims of Act No. 24,417. The objectives of the campaign are to "foster in the community an enlightened attitude with respect to the need to prevent domestic violence and provide treatment for its victims, rather than merely punishing those who perpetrate it". The publicity programme is directed at the community in general and at members of the groups and sectors that are most seriously affected by domestic violence.

The programme will be nationwide in scope and will continue for 12 months. It will comprise two stages.

During the first stage, work will be limited to the City of Buenos Aires and vicinity, with an emphasis on the content of Act No. 24,417. The anticipated results are as follows:

(a) Greater awareness and understanding of the importance of keeping records of all complaints made in cases of domestic violence;

(b) Enhanced communication among, and coordination of the work of, community legal action centres, government agencies (notably the information and counselling centres provided for in the Regulatory Decree) and non-governmental organizations that provide technical assistance, legal or therapeutic, in the area of domestic violence;

(c) Realization of the fact that the Act is informal in nature and that its main purpose is to make competent organizations and institutions more readily accessible to victims of violence.

The second stage will be nationwide in scope and will involve the institutional cooperation of the Ministry of the Interior, the Ministry of Health and Social Action and the Civil Service Department; in addition, the National Women's Council and the National Council for Children and the Family will be closely associated with the campaign.

In this stage, information about the Act will be more specifically aimed at civil servants and other government personnel who are involved in activities relating to protection from domestic violence. The anticipated results include:

(a) Preparation and publication of a national guide to resources available in the area of protection against domestic violence;

(b) Action to foster specific training for federal civil servants working in areas related to the issue of domestic violence, and to promote the inclusion of such training in university programmes.

At least 10 provinces have adopted legal provisions of some type covering cases of domestic violence.

At the federal level, the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women was ratified by Act No. 24,632 of 9 April 1996.

## Article 6

[Prostitution]

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures, including legislation, to suppress all forms of traffic in women and exploitation of prostitution of women.

There have been no advances or changes since the previous report.

## Article 7

[Political and public life]

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the political and public life of the country and, in particular, shall ensure to women, on equal terms with men, the right:

(a) To vote in all elections and public referenda and to be eligible for election to all publicly elected bodies;

(b) To participate in the formulation of government policy and the implementation thereof and to hold public office and perform all public functions at all levels of government;

(c) To participate in non-governmental organizations and associations concerned with the public and political life of the country.

Act No. 24,012, known as the Quotas Act, was passed in 1991, and its Regulatory Decree was issued as Decree No. 1993 in the same year. The result was a quantum jump in the numbers of women holding the public offices covered in the Act.

Growth in those numbers has continued, albeit more slowly, following the partial renewal of the membership of the Chamber of Deputies in 1993 and 1995: the proportion of women Deputies increased from 5.8 per cent in 1991 to 24.5 per cent in 1995, and stands at 28 per cent today.

When the members of the Constituent Conventions were elected in 1994, women occupied 25.6 per cent of the seats (there were 78 women out of a total of 305 Convention members), thanks to the Quotas Act.

Provincial legislatures have widely varying numbers of women members, ranging from one out of a total of 40 members in Tucumán (2.5 per cent) to 5 out of 16 members in Tierra del Fuego.

In the Legislature of the City of Buenos Aires, the House Leader of one of the parties is a woman.

In 1995, only 4 per cent of the country's mayors were women.

The presence of women on the national executives of political parties has increased. In the case of the Justicialist Party, women accounted for 26 per cent of the total in 1996, up from 9.8 per cent in 1994, while in the case of the Radical Civic Union the corresponding figures were 0 per cent in 1994 and 1.5 per cent in 1996.

In 1996 a woman was appointed to the Federal Cabinet as Minister of Education, while the Department of the Environment and Natural Resources and the Civil Service Department are headed by women.

As regards senior administrative positions in the upper echelons of the federal civil service, women occupy 22.9 per cent of National Directorates, 15.1 per cent of General Directorates, and 28.8 per cent of Directorates.

In the judiciary, women hold 8.7 per cent of all senior positions in Provincial Supreme Courts.

As regards non-governmental women's organizations, the National Women's Council has prepared and published an initial Directory of Women's and Mixed Organizations having aims or programmes that are of relevance to women's issues. The Directory contains entries for over 350 organizations throughout the

country, arranged by region, with information on their specific areas of interest.

It is noteworthy that most of these non-governmental organizations are active in more than one field; the subject areas that occur with the greatest frequency are education, 53 per cent; health, 51 per cent; gender training, 48 per cent; social advancement, 47 per cent; violence, 38 per cent; legal rights, 37 per cent; and employment and work, 35 per cent.

Technical assistance has been made available to women and groups of women who wish to start associations or organizations, in the form of a training kit entitled: "Women's organizations: a guide to starting a civil association".

Furthermore, financial support has been forthcoming as a result of an initiative whereby women's organizations were invited to submit projects aimed at the advancement of women and the reduction of gender gaps. In all, 115 projects were submitted from groups in various provinces, and 28 of them were selected.[9]

All the projects that were finally selected originated from the following provinces: Mendoza, Santa Fé, Buenos Aires, the Federal Capital, Tucumán, Misiones, Córdoba, Neuquén and Río Negro.

This economic assistance yielded significant results. Of the 46 activities identified, training and awareness workshops accounted for 50 per cent, radio programmes 9 per cent, and teaching materials, including textbooks, 20 per cent. From the standpoint of the organizations involved, the exercise was useful in several ways: it enabled them to establish networks, obtain official standing with the Office of the Inspector-General of Justice, participate in national meetings of women, and make contact with international cooperation agencies. It is also worth noting that two organizations in Córdoba Province were able to influence the drafting of proposed legislation directly affecting the status of women.

As regards the target population, the projects which received support were aimed primarily at middle- and lower-class women in the 27-30-age group.

The total number of women who participated in workshops or took courses under the various projects was approximately 1,600. It is difficult to estimate the total more accurately, since many projects received support for such activities as information campaigns or the publication of training materials, and such activities can hardly be evaluated in quantitative terms.

In the final analysis, the most useful aspect was that the organizations concerned were able to receive support without losing their independence. This put them in an advantageous position: with the visibility and legitimacy resulting from having had a project approved by the National Women's Council,

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[9] Representatives of the United Nations Development Programme, the Latin American Faculty of Social Sciences (FLACSO) and the National Women's Council took part in the selection process.

they stood an excellent chance of obtaining further funding from international agencies.

## Article 8

[International representation]

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to ensure to women, on equal terms with men and without any discrimination, the opportunity to represent their Governments at the international level and to participate in the work of international organizations.

With regard to the Foreign Diplomatic Corps, 9 per cent of all ambassadors in 1994 were women. This figure increases to 10 per cent with the inclusion of Secretaries and Ministers.

## Article 9

[Nationality]

1. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men to acquire, change or retain their nationality. They shall ensure in particular that neither marriage to an alien nor change of nationality by the husband during marriage shall automatically change the nationality of the wife, render her stateless or force upon her the nationality of the husband.

2. States Parties shall grant women equal rights with men with respect to the nationality of their children.

There is no change in respect of these two issues.

## Article 10

[Education]

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in order to ensure to them equal rights with men in the field of education and in particular to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same conditions for career and vocational guidance, for access to studies and for the achievement of diplomas in educational establishments of all categories in rural as well as in urban areas; this equality shall be ensured in pre-school, general, technical, professional and higher technical education, as well as in all types of vocational training;

(b) Access to the same curricula, the same examinations, teaching staff with qualifications of the same standard and school premises and equipment of the same quality;

(c) The elimination of any stereotyped concept of the roles of men and women at all levels and in all forms of education by encouraging co-education and other types of education which will help to achieve this aim and, in particular, by the revision of textbooks and school programmes and the adaptation of teaching methods;

(d) The same opportunities to benefit from scholarships and other study grants;

(e) The same opportunities for access to programmes of continuing education, including adult and functional literacy programmes, particularly those aimed at reducing, at the earliest possible time, any gap in education existing between men and women;

(f) The reduction of female student drop-out rates and the organization of programmes for girls and women who have left school prematurely;

(g) The same opportunities to participate actively in sports and physical education;

(h) Access to specific educational information to help to ensure the health and well-being of families, including information and advice on family planning.

An educational profile of the population aged 15 and above has been constructed, based jointly on the population attending and the population having formerly attended an educational institution, to examine changes between 1980 and 1991 for the population whose primary, secondary or higher education is complete or incomplete.

In 1991, 32 per cent of the population aged 15 and above, including both sexes, had completed primary education, 12 per cent had completed secondary education, and 6.2 per cent had completed higher or university education.

Changes between 1980 and 1991 show a considerable gain for women, with high growth in the proportion of the population having completed secondary education, with or without the completion of higher education. Indicators for women show a much greater change than those for men, although it should be noted that women started from a lower base.

Changes between 1980 and 1991 in regions and provinces generally reflect a similar trend.

For 1991, the overall rate of access - attendance - to the education system shows women at a slight disadvantage: the relative rate was 29.9 per cent, that is, 1 per cent lower than the rate for men. Analysis of the situation in the provinces shows a greater range of rates for those never having attended an educational institution, since while in some cases the situation of women was better than that of men - Córdoba, Entre Ríos, La Pampa, San Juan, San Luis, La Rioja and Tucumán - comparison of provincial rates with national averages reveals some critical situations in provinces, some which were more beneficial, and many which were similar to national levels.

A more precise assessment of the situation of women is gained by calculating the rate of those never having attended an educational institution for the population aged 15 and above, which shows a decline. It may be anticipated that the low rates recorded in provinces or districts experiencing greater social progress and economic growth hide larger segments of the population requiring reabsorption into the education system.

Analysis of enrolment rates confirms the expansion of primary education, which covered an average of 95.7 per cent of both boys and girls aged 6 to 12.

The indicators and distribution by track or subject area for female students enrolled in the education system, particularly at the secondary level, as well as at the university level, offer the most convincing evidence of discrimination or, rather, of the behaviour of women in choosing certain courses and not others.

Analysis by administering authority indicates that for 1988, national enrolment figures showed more males enrolled at every level with the exception of primary education, where females accounted for 53 per cent. The biggest percentage of males in higher education (51 per cent) is striking, since many of the institutions at this level are teacher-training institutions, with a high percentage of female enrolment.

Provincial enrolment was the opposite of that at the national level, since females were in the majority at all levels with the exception of primary education, with a high concentration at the higher level, where women accounted for 76 per cent.

Municipal enrolment showed higher figures for males at the primary and secondary levels (females accounted for only 26 per cent of enrolments), with women, in contrast, better represented at the higher level, with a figure of 79 per cent.

The private sector showed a trend towards majority female enrolment at all levels with the exception of university. Females accounted for 53 per cent at the primary level and approximately 60 per cent at the secondary and higher levels, compared with 49 per cent at the university level.

A comparative study of the different tracks at the secondary level and the distribution of enrolment by sex reveal that females were concentrated in the high school certificate (bachillerato) (63 per cent) and commercial (58 per cent) courses, while they accounted for only 20 per cent on technical courses and 25 per cent on agricultural courses. Thus, at this level, women's choices perpetuate sexual stereotypes.

Analysis of women's participation in technical secondary education merits particular mention. While women's participation increased over the period 1988-1992, it is still very low in comparison with men's, having reached only 9 per cent in 1988 and 14 per cent in 1992 for the whole of the basic and advanced cycles. Analysis of each of these cycles is the same as that of the overall figure.

With regard to access to university, women's participation in 1992 was somewhat lower than men's: 47.3 per cent in comparison with 48.5 per cent for men for all enrolments, although women outnumbered men in enrolments, reflecting a trend confirmed in the national university students census carried out in 1994, where men accounted for 47.6 per cent and women 52.2 per cent of enrolments.

With regard to differences by size of institution, women have higher representation in small- and medium-sized institutions. One example of the limited preference for technical subjects is offered by the National Technological University, where women are a clear minority: 19.6 per cent.

The National Programme for the Promotion of Equal Opportunities for Women (PRIOM) has completed a survey of developments at the national level in research, teaching and university outreach studies in the area of women's and/or gender studies.

Of a total of 41 academic units surveyed, 33 universities are carrying out teaching activities relating to the subject of gender. While a gender focus is included in undergraduate and postgraduate studies, systematic training programmes are concentrated at the postgraduate level. Research covers a very wide range of subject areas, concentrated in the following disciplines: sociology, education, history, psychology, anthropology, law, philosophy, economics, literature, art and politics.

Analysis of the education of the workforce in employment and of the unemployed in the country's major urban areas confirms a number of interpretations applicable to the labour market for men and women:

Women in the workforce are "less educated" than men, which is the opposite of the educational profile of the population in general, that is, it is the case that even with a higher level of education not all women enter, and/or perhaps do not aspire to enter the labour market;

Women in the federal capital possess a higher level of education than those in Greater Buenos Aires and the province of Buenos Aires;

It is striking that even in the federal capital the proportion of women with higher and university education is lower (20.6 per cent) than the proportion of men (25.1 per cent). This is one more indication that women stay on at university, but do not always push to join the labour market and that, in addition, but secondarily, discrimination makes access by women more difficult.

Analysis of the country's major population centres as a whole - urban population - confirms expectations: the top segment is broader among working women, that is 36.8 per cent have higher or university education, compared with unemployed women, of whom only 20.1 per cent have attained a similar level.

The bottom segment of those with a low level of education, however, is also broader among working women, when the opposite might have been expected, which

demonstrates that the need to work creates pressure to accept any kind of employment and join the workforce.

By Act No. 24,195 (Official Gazette of 5 May 1993), the "Federal Education Act", a new education system has been established, marking progress in terms of the status of women. The Act is drafted in non-sexist language and makes education compulsory to the age of 15.

The aim of the national education system is to facilitate "... the full and permanent education of men and women ..." (art. 6) and to assure "... all inhabitants of the country effective exercise of their right to learn, through equality of opportunity and means, without any discrimination whatsoever". The Act changes the structure of the education system, which now comprises:

(a) Initial education;

(b) Basic general education;

(c) Multi-track education; and

(d) Higher education.

## Article 11

[Labour laws]

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of employment in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to work as an inalienable right of all human beings;

(b) The right to the same employment opportunities, including the application of the same criteria for selection in matters of employment;

(c) The right to free choice of profession and employment, the right to promotion, job security and all benefits and conditions of service and the right to receive vocational training and retraining, including apprenticeships, advanced vocational training and recurrent training;

(d) The right to equal remuneration, including benefits, and to equal treatment in respect of work of equal value, as well as equality of treatment in the evaluation of the quality of work;

(e) The right to social security, particularly in cases of retirement, unemployment, sickness, invalidity and old age and other incapacity to work, as well as the right to paid leave;

(f) The right to protection of health and to safety in working conditions, including the safeguarding of the function of reproduction.

2. In order to prevent discrimination against women on the grounds of marriage or maternity and to ensure their effective right to work, States Parties shall take appropriate measures:

(a) To prohibit, subject to the imposition of sanctions, dismissal on the grounds of pregnancy or of maternity leave and discrimination in dismissals on the basis of marital status;

(b) To introduce maternity leave with pay or with comparable social benefits without loss of former employment, seniority or social allowances;

(c) To encourage the provision of the necessary supporting social services to enable parents to combine family obligations with work responsibilities and participation in public life, in particular through promoting the establishment and development of a network of child-care facilities;

(d) To provide special protection to women during pregnancy in types of work proved to be harmful to them.

3. Protective legislation relating to matters covered in this article shall be reviewed periodically in the light of scientific and technological knowledge and shall be revised, repealed or extended as necessary.

Act No. 24,465 embodies new hiring arrangements, and strengthens protection against unemployment among the groups it covers, among which it specifies women.

The Act, through affirmative action measures, promotes the hiring of women workers by providing incentives to employers, such as:

Authorizing the conclusion of contracts with a minimum length of six months and a maximum length of two years;

Exempting employers from 50 per cent of the employers' contribution to social security;

Termination of contract by simple lapse of time without a right to compensation (except for termination without due cause before expiration).

Act No. 24,576 incorporates in the Labour Contracts Act a new chapter entitled "On vocational training". The Act refers to equality of opportunity between male and female workers in the area of vocational training and, in that regard, provides that: "Vocational and on-the-job training, on equal conditions of access and treatment, shall be a fundamental right for all workers, both men and women".

Within the Ministry of Education is the National Institute for Technological Education (INET), a government agency offering a consultative mechanism to representatives of industry. It has a National Council for Education and Work, comprising representatives of the trade unions, employers and State, and is responsible for the coordination of technological training as it impacts on the reorganization of technical secondary schools.

This agency is implementing a project entitled "Promotion of women's participation in technical and vocational training" with the aim of encouraging young women to take technical courses and of promoting a gender perspective in institutions with responsibility for technological education.

In addition the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Public Works and Services, together with the Ministry of Labour, is implementing the Restructuring Support Programme, which is scheduled to be implemented between 1995 and 1999, and which offers training to unemployed men and women through three specifically oriented components: the Young People's Project, the Micro-Enterprises Project and the Image Project. The National Women's Council is formulating, in conjunction with the implementing agencies, activities to promote equality of men and women.

The Young People's Project is aimed at men and women from 16 to 30 years of age, with limited resources, unemployed or underemployed, and with no more than a secondary education. The project facilitates participation by women with children, providing them with allowances for each child under eight.

The project campaign has made use of images and language intended to encourage participation by women, who are expected to account for at least 40 per cent of enrolments. The institutions responsible for providing training have been familiarized with the project's objectives and commitments in terms of equality of opportunity between men and women.

The Image Project, conceived as a complement to the Young People's Project, has been designed as a means of providing certification so that men and women with a trade can find work. There was significant participation by women in the pilot trial for the project: women represented 60 per cent of both the qualifying population and of enrolments.

The Micro-Enterprises Project promotes self-managed job creation through the strengthening of entrepreneurial enterprises. It has a component on training and technical assistance for self-employment and micro-enterprises, and, in particular, encourages participation by women through incentives and promotion activities.

Women constitute 32 per cent of the qualifying population. The rate of participation by women was higher (36.5 per cent) among enrollees completing courses under the pilot project.

The greatest concentration of activities under projects formulated by women is in commerce (around 23 per cent), health, education and personal services (around 21 per cent) and manufacture of textile or leather products (around 17 per cent). There is virtually no participation by women in micro-enterprise projects relating to hard technology.

The National Women's Council has developed, in conjunction with the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, through the Offices of Employment and Vocational Training, a project entitled "Occupational Guidance for Women Service", with the aim of helping to improve the terms on which women enter and remain in the labour market by providing counselling and personal assistance before employment is sought.

The working method designed promotes a collective approach to the problem of unemployment among women, linking it to gender-conditioning factors affecting women's employment (inter alia, transition from the home to outside the home, discounting of the knowledge and skills of women). The project has developed trials at various levels of implementation in the provinces of Santa Fé, Misiones and Jujuy.

There is also a project entitled "Nursery for women's enterprises" aimed at promoting self-employment through the establishment of family, single-person or partnership enterprises, to which end women with experience or with an idea for a project are being trained and provided with technical support so that they can formulate and implement a business plan.

In pursuance of this objective two trials were conducted simultaneously (between November 1994 and June 1995) with the aim of obtaining comparative results, on the basis of which a teaching method was developed and revised, together with a video on its use.

Another level of action to deal with this problem is offered by the Community Services Programme of the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, in which the National Women's Council also participates.

This transitional employment programme, in which 10,420 people are currently enrolled, allows the employment of unemployed female workers, whose social services projects are approved by implementation units established by the various provinces. It is anticipated that 80 per cent of those enrolled will be women, preferably heads of household, who will receive unearned financial assistance of up to 200 pesos per month and liability insurance from the Ministry of Labour and Social Security.

Support will be given to those projects which are aimed at improving the quality of life of the population, in particular that segment with limited resources (community vegetable gardens, day-care centres, children's canteens, information campaigns and/or prophylactic measures etc.). The National Women's Council has developed techniques to advise on presentation, assessment, monitoring and follow-up for projects which are accepted.

With respect to social security, Act No. 24,241 of 1993 established the Integrated Retirement and Pensions System, which provides coverage for old age, invalidity and death.

The system comprises two schemes: state, or contributory, and individually funded. Everyone under the system has the option of electing which of the two schemes they wish to be covered under.

Participation in the system is compulsory for working men and women over 18 years of age, whether employed or self-employed, and whether in the public or private sector. It also provides for voluntary participation, as in the case of homemakers who wish to be covered under the lower level of contributions, unless they opt for a different, higher level of contributions (Act No. 24,347).

With respect to old-age benefit, there is a minimum age of 65 for men and 60 for women; the latter may, under both schemes, opt to continue in employment to 65. There is no differentiation on the basis of sex with regard to invalidity benefit.

With respect to death, the Act establishes death benefits for widows, widowers, cohabitants of either sex, and unmarried children of either sex and child widows to the age of 18.

Under the individually funded scheme there is indirect discrimination against women workers, since greater life expectancy and lower retirement age have a negative impact on the amount of benefit.

Recognizing that the system is discriminatory, since women who have made identical contributions to those made by men receive lower benefits, the Parliamentary High Commissioner (in March 1996) issued a recommendation addressed to the Office of the Superintendent for the Administration of Retirement and Pension Funds (AFJP) requesting the preparation of differential calculation formulae and actuarial tables to end inequality and injustice in the operation of the system.

With respect to the family allowances scheme and in the context of the general reform of the system, special consideration has been given to the situation of women. Maternity benefits - which consist of the payment of an amount equivalent to that which would have been paid for employment over the period of leave provided for by law - are received by women workers irrespective of salary level. One kind of discrimination underlying the previous scheme has also been eliminated, since benefits which could only be claimed by men may now also be claimed on equal terms by women workers.

In the field of labour relations, Decree No. 2385/93 incorporates conduct constituting sexual harassment in the Civil Service Basic Regulations, in the chapter on "Duties and Prohibitions". A bill penalizing sexual harassment at work, and establishing a system of aggravated damages, is halfway to approval in the Chamber of Deputies.

## Article 12

[Health]

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in the field of health care in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, access to health-care services, including those related to family planning.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of paragraph 1 of this article, States Parties shall ensure to women appropriate services in connection with pregnancy, confinement and the post-natal period, granting free services where necessary, as well as adequate nutrition during pregnancy and lactation.

The constitutional reform included an obligation on the part of Congress to establish a comprehensive special social security scheme for women during pregnancy and lactation and for neglected children until completion of elementary education.

For the five-year period 1990-1995, it is anticipated that life expectancy for women will be 74.01 and for men 68.05 years.

The maternal mortality rate for 1991 was 48 per hundred thousand live births, which, despite having dropped, is high in comparison with international levels, particularly if it is considered that under-registration is calculated at 50 per cent.

With respect to age groups, most deaths occurred among women aged over 35; in the 45-49 age group, there was a rate of 161 maternal deaths for each 100,000 live births.

A breakdown of all maternal deaths by specific cause shows abortion to be the principal cause of death: during the 1980s around one third of all maternal deaths were due to abortion, and almost another third were classified without specific cause, under the heading "other", it being generally agreed that this classification includes an unknown number of abortions.

In 1989 almost half (45.8 per cent) of all hospital discharges of women related to obstetric causes of various kinds. All discharges for such causes were grouped in three categories: (1) 41.6 per cent related to normal deliveries; (2) 45.7 per cent were due to complications arising directly from pregnancy, childbirth and the post-partum period; and (3) 11.3 per cent were due to abortion.

There is little detail within these groupings regarding obstetric complications and abortion; most complications are categorized as "other" (accounting for 38 per cent). The same is true of the grouping on abortion: of a total of 11.3 per cent, 10.3 per cent relates to the "other" category.

No national figures on family planning are available.

A study on poverty revealed that, at the end of the 1980s, only 43 per cent of women used contraceptives at the time of the survey: the proportion was lower among the poor (37.2 per cent) and greater among women not in that category (48.9 per cent); further, poor women made greater use of the pill, injections and traditional methods, whereas those not in that category made greater use of the coil and condoms.

In 1993 a survey was conducted in the Conurbano (Buenos Aires conurbation) which indicated that 47.6 per cent of the women surveyed used contraceptives, the most widespread methods being the pill (32.8 per cent) and condoms (16.7 per cent), followed by intrauterine devices (IUDs) (15 per cent) and other methods. According to the survey, 60 per cent of women made use of modern methods and the remaining 40 per cent traditional methods.

In terms of legislation, a bill on responsible procreation is halfway to approval in the Chamber of Deputies.

## Article 13

[Finance and social security]

States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in other areas of economic and social life in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, the same rights, in particular:

(a) The right to family benefits;

(b) The right to bank loans, mortgages and other forms of financial credit;

(c) The right to participate in recreational activities, sports and all aspects of cultural life.

The National Women's Council, in conjunction with an Advisory Committee of Businesswomen, undertook a pilot project to train women in management and business administration. Fifty women out of a total of 520 applicants benefited from training under the project, which emphasized the relationship between purely business issues, discussion and debate on credit policies for micro-enterprises and problems arising from gender relations.

Finally, the training emphasized the importance of the social and economic requirements of women and the need for programmes and projects that promote their employment and for sustained action through public policies and on the part of organizations.

In the light of these needs, the National Women's Council concluded an agreement in 1994 with the National Credit Programme for Micro- and Small Enterprises (Ministry of Economic Affairs and Public Works and Services) for the coordination of training and technical assistance activities for the design and preparation of projects that qualify for financing from Programme resources. Of the loans granted under the Programme (to December 1995) for the various sectors of economic activity, women received 14.38 per cent of the total, while 75 per cent went to the services and trade sector.

In keeping with this approach, 20 non-governmental organizations with experience in training and in providing technical assistance to productive enterprises were invited to participate in discussions on a work proposal for the development of a training methodology that would include the gender perspective and be capable of replication at the national level.

The National Women's Council also submitted a research proposal aimed at ascertaining the modalities of participation by women in Programme enterprises and at looking into their access to credit. International cooperation is being sought to provide technical and financial assistance for the establishment of a

documentation, training, advisory services and technical assistance centre for women engaged in productive activities.

Article 14

[Rural women]

1. States Parties shall take into account the particular problems faced by rural women and the significant roles which rural women play in the economic survival of their families, including their work in the non-monetized sectors of the economy, and shall take all appropriate measures to ensure the application of the provisions of the present Convention to women in rural areas.

2. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in rural areas in order to ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women, that they participate in and benefit from rural development and, in particular, shall ensure to such women the right:

(a) To participate in the elaboration and implementation of development planning at all levels;

(b) To have access to adequate health care facilities, including information, counselling and services in family planning;

(c) To benefit directly from social security programmes;

(d) To obtain all types of training and education, formal and non-formal, including that relating to functional literacy, as well as, inter alia, the benefit of all community and extension services, in order to increase their technical proficiency;

(e) To organize self-help groups and cooperatives in order to obtain equal access to economic opportunities through employment or self-employment;

(f) To participate in all community activities;

(g) To have access to agricultural credit and loans, marketing facilities, appropriate technology and equal treatment in land and agrarian reform as well as in land resettlement schemes;

(h) To enjoy adequate living conditions, particularly in relation to housing, sanitation, electricity and water supply, transport and communications.

In Argentina, the incorporation of rural women into productive activity occurs mainly in smallholdings, which form the basis of the agrarian structure for agro-industrial production in regional economies outside the Pampas.

In 1993, the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries launched the Social Agricultural Programme which funds enterprises for small producers throughout the country. The Programme has incorporated the gender perspective and is adapting the methodologies already used in the north-western and north-

eastern regions in order to ensure that that perspective is effectively mainstreamed into all activities, from the initial participatory analytical studies to the identification and formulation of projects and the provision of training and technical assistance in the field.

## Article 15

[Equality before the law]

1. States Parties shall accord to women equality with men before the law.

2. States Parties shall accord to women, in civil matters, a legal capacity identical to that of men and the same opportunities to exercise that capacity. In particular, they shall give women equal rights to conclude contracts and to administer property and shall treat them equally in all stages of procedure in courts and tribunals.

3. States Parties agree that all contracts and all other private instruments of any kind with a legal effect which is directed at restricting the legal capacity of women shall be deemed null and void.

4. States Parties shall accord to men and women the same rights with regard to the law relating to the movement of persons and freedom to choose their residence and domicile.

(No changes made.)

## Article 16

[Matrimonial and family law]

1. States Parties shall take all appropriate measures to eliminate discrimination against women in all matters relating to marriage and family relations and, in particular, shall ensure, on a basis of equality of men and women:

(a) The same right to enter into marriage;

(b) The same right freely to choose a spouse and to enter into marriage only with their free and full consent;

(c) The same rights and responsibilities during marriage and at its dissolution;

(d) The same rights and responsibilities as parents, irrespective of their marital status, in matters relating to their children; in all cases the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(e) The same rights to decide freely and responsibly on the number and spacing of their children and to have access to the information, education and means to enable them to exercise these rights;

(f) The same rights and responsibilities with regard to guardianship, wardship, trusteeship and adoption of children, or similar institutions where these concepts exist in national legislation; in all cases, the interests of the children shall be paramount;

(g) The same personal rights as husband and wife, including the right to choose a family name, a profession and an occupation;

(h) The same rights for both spouses in respect of the ownership, acquisition, management, administration, enjoyment and disposition of property, whether free of charge or for a valuable consideration.

2. The betrothal and the marriage of a child shall have no legal effect, and all necessary action, including legislation, shall be taken to specify a minimum age for marriage and to make the registration of marriages in an official register compulsory.

Still pending to date is the amendment of article 1276 of the Civil Code, which enshrines inequality because it entrusts the administration of assets of uncertain origin to the husband.

This report also reaffirms what was stated in the previous report about the need for new legislation on maintenance and to guarantee its enjoyment. The implementation of the law currently in force still leaves much to be desired, since, according to data from the Child Welfare Department of the National Civil Chamber, only 3 out of every 10 separated women who institute proceedings against their former husbands for the payment of maintenance succeed in collecting such payments for their children. The remaining 70 per cent receive the monthly payment late, irregularly or never.

ANNEX 1

National report for the sixth session of the Regional Conference on the Integration of Women into the Economic and Social Development of Latin America and the Caribbean (Mar del Plata, 1994): preparation of the report

Argentina was selected to host the regional preparatory meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, which took place in Mar del Plata from 26 to 30 September 1994 with the participation of representatives from both governmental and non-governmental sectors. From the second half of 1993 onwards, a large part of the State's human and economic resources which had been earmarked for the implementation of policies to promote equality of opportunities between men and women were allocated to activities related to the holding of this meeting.

For purposes of the organization and coordination of the preparatory activities, Decree No. 1370/93 of the Executive Branch created the National Coordination Centre, within the Department of Human Rights and Women, which fell under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, International Trade and Worship.

The National Women's Council provided the staff of the Centre and assumed responsibility for preparing the national report presented at the meetings. To this end, a strategy was elaborated with two objectives in mind: the first, to take advantage of the opportunity to promote greater awareness of and disseminate information about gender issues throughout society; and the second, to compile the experience gained throughout the country in this area. This meant that a great deal of importance had to be attached to the procedure for obtaining the consensus that was sought. The Council had the tremendous responsibility of organizing extensive consultations that would also serve to strengthen the governmental and non-governmental bodies concerned with women.

In addition, and with a view to obtaining data at the national level in each of the critical areas - health, education, violence, employment, political participation, poverty, and United Nations proposals - consultants expert in the field were hired from a roster that was compiled after a competitive review of the candidates' work experience. The experts hired by the National Women's Council focused their work on: (a) the situation in the early 1980s; (b) the changes that had taken place and the current situation; and (c) the recommendation of policies to guide future actions.

The process of elaborating the national report provided an excellent opportunity to promote greater public awareness of discrimination and of the action that must be taken to eliminate it. A number of sectors were mobilized, including non-governmental organizations, whose efforts have helped to give greater visibility to the problem of discrimination against women.

In the light of this experience and commitment, the Council invited non-governmental organizations to make contributions and organized a workshop on the theme "Preparing the national report - Beijing 95" on 25 and 26 July. This meeting, which was notable for the diversity of points of view and

representation, concluded with a series of recommendations to be considered in the elaboration of the regional plan of action.

All these activities were undertaken in parallel in order to derive maximum benefit from consultations, given the country's federal structure, geographic diversity and regional particularities. Seven regions were thus considered: North-West, North-East, Central region, Cuyo, Patagonia, the Province of Buenos Aires and the City of Buenos Aires.

The strategy consisted in establishing a number of consultative bodies to enable information on the situation of women to flow from the bottom up, that is to say, from municipalities and intendancies to the provincial units, and from there to the regions before finally reaching the national level.

The first step was to send to all units specifically concerned with women and to provincial statistical departments instructions based on the United Nations guidelines for the preparation of national reports, which include the so-called critical areas.

This initial survey produced the provincial reports, which were processed by seven consultants in accordance with an established regional system. This in turn yielded the regional reports on the situation of women in each of the regions studied.

The regional reports were expected to describe the situation of women, in both quantitative and qualitative terms, and to show the progress achieved by the provincial mechanisms in institutionalizing and elaborating policies and developing programmes. They were also expected to contain proposals aimed at satisfying the unmet needs which had been identified in the earlier surveys.

The quality of the reports was uneven, since the data required were not always available owing to the lack of access to informational resources and the inequalities in the administrative structures of the different regions.

Upon completion of the reports, regional meetings were held in each of the focal points to evaluate and discuss the results obtained. This "circular" approach was followed at the same time as activities were being organized to promote and mobilize women and their organizations with a view to enhancing the community's awareness of women's issues.

Simultaneously, seven closed regional workshops were held to review the claims being made on behalf of women. These workshops were coordinated by experts from the National Women's Council and used a group method that ensured that the decision-making process was both collective and rapid.

Among the many aims of the workshops were to place the information obtained from the regional reports into its proper context, continue the survey of policies and programmes, identify gaps in important areas and collect proposals for future action.

Participants were invited on the basis of their specific functions in the areas covered in the reports and their role in governmental, non-governmental

and/or academic institutions. Workshop participants therefore included representatives from the different social fields (health, education, employment, social action, rural women), the departments responsible for compiling data (mainly the statistical offices), academic circles, local non-governmental organizations and provincial women's groups. The following regional workshops were held: North-eastern Argentina: City of Posadas; Cuyo region: City of Mendoza; Patagonia region: City of Neuquén; North-western Argentina: City of Tucumán; Central region: City of Córdoba; Province of Buenos Aires: City of La Plata; and the Federal Capital region.

The conclusions of these workshops were used as the basis for a general analytical study of the social situation of women in Argentina, since they reflected the opinions of the groups working in this field at the national level. The group approach followed for decision-making was instrumental in obtaining consensus recommendations. This meant that the material obtained was unquestionably representative of the needs expressed in each of the regions. These workshops made a valuable contribution, since they were organized using the same methodology throughout the country, thereby ensuring that the results could be validly compared. In work with the groups, moreover, the same guidelines were followed in all regions: profile of participants, key presenters, methodology, etc.

The workshops adopted recommendations for actions that could be taken in elaborating the Platform for Action. Mention should be made of the actions that were most recommended, in view of the frequency with which they recurred in each region, thereby becoming a constant for the entire country. These were mainly actions to overcome difficulties of access to employment for women, since it is in the field of employment that the inequality between women and men can be most clearly seen.

Requests were made for specific actions aimed not only at the public sector but also at the private sector to encourage and promote the training of women on a basis of equality with men and to facilitate their integration into the productive sectors, given the accelerating pace of change in those sectors. Training is viewed as the most effective tool for facilitating entry into the labour force and, together with full employment, are the demands which were heard from both governmental and non-governmental organizations in order to tackle the problem of poverty among women.

On the subject of economic barriers to employment, at the meeting held with non-governmental organizations a recommendation was made for the urgent implementation of policies to promote the development of the regional economies and, in particular, the participation of women in those economies. Great emphasis was also placed on the establishment of mechanisms to facilitate access for women to soft and interest-free loans. Special mention was made of female heads of households, since there had been a significant increase nationally in the number of households headed by women. This increase in female-headed households has been most pronounced in poor households. Between 1970 and 1991, the proportion rose from 16.5 per cent to 22.5 per cent. For this reason, what was especially sought for women who were heads of families was to promote free access to credit, especially for land, housing and productive enterprises.

Rural women constitute a group on whose behalf the implementation of specific policies was requested. Giving recognition and attaching value to the work of rural women is one of the most urgent recommendations from the various regions. In order to help redress this situation, it was proposed to provide training for women and to amend the existing legislation.

Another of the concerns that emerged from the workshops was the lack of gender-disaggregated statistical data and the limited development of methodological criteria that specifically incorporate a gender perspective for the compilation of statistical data. The past decade has witnessed the intensification of the debate over the theory and method of compiling statistics that incorporate the gender perspective. The 1991 population census marked some progress in this area, since it permitted the employment situation of women to be more fully reflected. Gender is not a unit of analysis in the national statistical system.

The process as a whole produced an exhaustive list of recommendations in the aforementioned critical areas. Most of the recommendations were the same in all regional workshops.

In addition, working meetings were held with the Ministries which are engaged in programmes relating to women, such as the Ministry of Labour and Social Security, the Ministry of Culture and Education, the Ministry of Health and Social Action and the Ministry of Economic Affairs and Public Works and Services. Meetings and workshops were also held with non-governmental organizations and female legislators, researchers and academics. All of these inputs were used in the preparation of the national report which was presented at Mar del Plata during the Regional Conference.

ANNEX 2

Platform for Action (1995-2001) - Strategic objectives

Progress achieved by the Argentine Republic

Women and poverty

- Revision, adoption and maintenance of macroeconomic policies and development strategies that take account of the needs of women and support their efforts to overcome poverty.

- Revision of laws and administrative practices to ensure that women enjoy equal rights of access to economic resources.

- Granting access for women to savings and loans mechanisms and institutions.

- Formulation of gender-based methodologies and conducting of research to address the problem of how to eliminate poverty.

- Reduction of the incidence of structural poverty among women from 26.4 per cent in 1980 to 19 per cent in 1991, which accounted for 48.8 per cent of the total low-income population. The percentage of women heading low-income households declined between 1980 and 1991 from 21.6 per cent to 15.7 per cent.

- The permanent household survey for the Metropolitan Area (Federal Capital and 19 districts in the Greater Buenos Aires area) shows a decline in the low-income population from 19.5 per cent in October 1988 to 12.1 per cent in May 1995. This decline is due to the improvement in sanitary conditions. Data are not disaggregated by gender.

Women and the exercise of power and decision-making

- Adoption of measures to guarantee women equal access to and full participation in power structures and decision-making.

- Enhancing women's capacity to participate in decision-making and management.

- Adoption of the Quotas Act and regulatory decree: 30 per cent of women to be included in lists of candidates for elective national office. The percentage of women in the Chamber of Deputies rose from 6.5 per cent in 1983 to 24.5 per cent in 1995.

- Recognition by the Constitution of the full exercise of political rights under conditions of genuine equality of opportunity.

- Constitutional authority to approve affirmative action to promote equality of opportunity between men and women for access to posts in political parties.

Institutional mechanisms for the advancement of women

- Establishment or strengthening of national mechanisms and other governmental organs. Mainstreaming of the gender perspective into national legislation, policies, programmes and projects.

- Preparation and dissemination of data and information for use in gender-disaggregated planning and evaluation.

- Establishment of the National Women's Council by decree of the National Executive Branch as a unit of the Office of the President of the Republic with responsibility for monitoring the implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women and ensuring the full participation of women in the development process.

- Elaboration by the National Women's Council of a plan for equality of opportunities for women (1995-1999).

- Agreement between the National Women's Council and the National Statistical and Census Institute for the establishment of an integrated system of statistics on women.

- Establishment within the National Congress of the Bicameral Commission on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

- Decree No. 1013/95 establishing an ad hoc commission for the follow-up to the Plan of Action and the Fourth World Conference on Women.

Women and education

- Ensuring equal access to education.

- Eliminating illiteracy among women.

- Increasing access for women to vocational training, science and technology and continuing education.

- Introducing education and training systems that are non-discriminatory.

- Allocating sufficient resources for education reforms and monitoring the implementation of these reforms.

- Promoting continuing education and training for girls and women.

- Increasing access for women to secondary and higher education.

- Federal Education Act: incorporating equality of opportunities between men and women and the elimination of all discriminatory stereotypes from educational materials.

- Establishment of a national programme of equal opportunity for women by the Ministry of Culture and Education (20 provincial jurisdictions).

Women and health

- Promoting lifelong access for women to adequate, low-cost and high quality health care and information and related services.

- Strengthening prevention programmes that promote women's health.

- Taking gender-based initiatives to combat sexually transmitted diseases and HIV/AIDS and to address other sexual and reproductive health issues.

- Promoting research and disseminating information on women's health.

- Increasing resources and monitoring the follow-up to women's health.

- Reduction in maternal mortality: from 70 to 48 per hundred thousand live births between 1980 and 1991.

- Establishment of the programme Women, Health and Development within the Ministry of Health.

- Increase in life expectancy for women from 72.7 to 74.8 years between 1985 and 1995.

- National commitment towards mothers and children, 1991. The Argentine Government, with the cooperation of the Argentine Paediatric Association and the United Nations Children's Fund, adopted the goals established in the Plan of Action for implementing the World Declaration on the Survival, Protection and Development of Children in the 1990s in order to provide guidelines for the elaboration of policies and programmes for improving the health situation of mothers and infants.

- Reduction in maternal mortality to under 40 per hundred thousand throughout the country.

- Development and implementation of responsible procreation programmes in all jurisdictions in accordance with society's current system of values.

- Constitutional commitment to establish a comprehensive special social security scheme to protect mothers during pregnancy and lactation.

Women and human rights

- Promotion and protection of the human rights of women, through the full implementation of all human rights instruments, particularly the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women.

- Guaranteeing equality and non-discrimination both in the eyes of the law and in practice.

- Encouraging the acquisition of basic legal knowledge.

- Constitutional ranking of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discriminaticn against Women within the body of human rights treaties.

- Constitutional recognition of the power of the National Congress to take positive measures to guarantee genuine equality of opportunity and treatment and the full enjoyment of recognized rights.

Women and the media

- Improved access for women to the media and their participation in the expression of ideas and the adoption of decisions both in the media and through the media, as well as the participation of women in the new communications technologies.

- Promotion of a balanced and non-stereotypical image of women in the media.

Violence against women

- Adoption of comprehensive measures to prevent and eliminate violence against women.

- Study of the causes and consequences of violence against women and the effectiveness of preventive measures.

- Elimination of traffic in women and provision of assistance to victims of violence arising from prostitution and traffic in women.

- Implementation throughout the country of programmes and activities related to violence against women.

- Incorporation of the theme of violence against women into school curricula and federal police training programmes.

- Approval by the State of the incorporation into national law of the Inter-American Convention on the Prevention, Punishment and Eradication of Violence against Women.

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